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10/805,030	03/19/2004	Samuel Thomas Scott III	MS1-1898US	7931

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EXAMINER

STRONCZER, RYAN S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2425

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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10/12/2010

ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/805,030	Applicant(s) SCOTT ET AL.	
	Examiner Ryan Stronczer	Art Unit 2425	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 August 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,6-22,24-32,34-44,46-50,52 and 53 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3,6-44 and 46-53 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 3,23,33 and 51 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 19 August 2010 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 17, 21, 31, 44, and 50 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3, 23, 33, and 51 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

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invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9-13, 15, 17-4, 44, and 46-53 are rejected under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shah-Nazaroff (US Pat. No.: 6,157,377, hereinafter "Shah") and further in view of Plotnick et al. (Pub. No.: US 2002/0144262), and Rodriguez (US Pat. No.: 7,340,759).

As to claim 1, Shah, as cited in the previous Office Action, teaches the recited **"content server configured to distribute media content to a client device in response to a request from the client device"** as well as the recited **"valuation application configured to allocate a cost to the client device for the media content that is distributed."** As to the limitation that said valuation application is **"located on the content server,"** Fig. 3 of Shah teaches that server system 140 comprises a processing server and a billing server in communication with the client device.

As to the limitation that the cost allocated by said valuation application is **"a direct function of a user viewing interaction based on a view control input received during a playback of the media content requested,"** as well as the limitation that said content server is further configured to receive

a view control input from the client device after the media content and the advertisement have been distributed to the client device indicating how the media content and the advertisement are to be rendered, wherein the view control input comprises a navigation control selected from a plurality of navigation controls, wherein the plurality of navigation controls comprises: a fast-forward command; a skip ahead command; a jump to command; a pause command; a replay command; and a slow command;

Shah teaches the recited content server and valuation application and further teaches that the user may choose to pay for interactive effects (Fig. 5), but does not

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explicitly teach the recited functionality. In an analogous art, Rodriguez teaches a Near Video On-Demand (NVOD) system that allows the user to implement various interactive, or "trick play," effects such as rewinding, fast-forwarding, etc. Rodriguez teaches:

...if the subscriber began viewing a program under the normal play option and later desired to rewind the program, the subscriber may be given the option of utilizing random-access options...This may be accomplished by providing random-access functionality using one or more auxiliary channels...In this option, the pricing system may assign a price criteria based on a per/minute (or second) usage fee, particularly if the on-demand random access is accomplished using a separate random access channel. (col. 27/lines 36-47)

In addition to rewinding, Rodriguez discloses that said "random-access options" also include fast-forwarding and pausing (see col. 12-13). Fig. 5 of Shah teaches that the user may choose to pay for interactive effects, which, in the context of a VOD or NVOD system, would include trick-play functionality such as that described by Rodriguez above. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the random-access functionality taught by Rodriguez into the system of Shah to enable customers who did not initially order interactive effects to enable such options during playback.

As to the amended limitation of a valuation application located on the content server, said application:

configured to allocate a cost to the client device for the media content that is distributed, wherein the cost is a direct function of a user viewing interaction based on a view control input received during a playback of the media content requested;
the valuation application further configured to adjust the cost allocated for the media content according to the view control input and how the media content was rendered on the client device,

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wherein each navigation control of the plurality of navigation controls has an associated cost adjustment,

Rodriguez, col. 27 as cited above, teaches that the system includes a pricing system that may *"assign a price criteria based on a per/minute (or second) usage fee"* when the user engages random-access functionality.

As to the limitation that the content server is

further configured to distribute an advertisement with the media content by prepending the advertisement to the media content before the media content and the advertisement are distributed to the client device,

In an analogous art, Fig. 7 of Plotnick teaches a server-side ad management system (AMS) for inserting targeted advertising into on-demand content. Plotnick teaches, *"In addition, the [server-side AMS] will work with prepend/postpend ad opportunities in a VoD environment. The server side AMS 700 tracks avails including duration and bandwidth of the avail, and uses a number of algorithms to determine if the ad can be placed in the avail"* [0147]. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the server-side AMS of Plotnick into the server system of Shah to allow the system operator to take advantage of additional revenue-generating opportunities presented by the ad insertion of Plotnick.

As to the limitation of

an advertisement log located on the content server and configured to track if the advertisement is rendered for viewing by the client device based on the view control input received or a base time-line based on rendering both the media content and the advertisement on the client device

As analyzed above, Plotnick teaches that said server-side AMS includes “*viewing statistics collection...ad server content and distribution management...interface to traffic and billing systems, and support of the ad sales process*” [0147]. Plotnick further teaches that, “*If the ads are displayed to the subscriber, the STB data server 1112 generates an ad play report 1160. The ad availability information 1158 and the ad play reports 1160 are formatted 1162 to create reports/logs 1164 that are forwarded to the [Traffic & Billing] system 712*” [0169]. The Examiner notes that the reports/logs 1164 are forwarded to T&B system 712 which located on the server 700. Generating a report indicating that selected advertisements were not displayed due to the trick-play functionality employed by the user, as taught by Plotnick, is equivalent to the recited tracking if the advertisement was rendered based on the view control input.

As to claims 17, 21, 31, 44, and 50, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated herein. The digital video server comprising a valuation application recited in claim 17 is taught by the server of Shah combined with the Ad Management Server (AMS) of Plotnick, as analyzed above with respect to claim 1. The client device recited in claim 21 is taught by client device of Shah (Fig. 2) and the user’s set top box (STB) taught by Plotnick (see, e.g., Fig. 3). Examiner maintains that practicing the system of Shah in view of Plotnick and Rodriguez would have rendered obvious the method recited in claims 31 and 44. The recited computer-executable instructions (claims 31 and 44) and computer-readable media (claim 50) are inherent in the client device and server taught by Shah, Plotnick, and Rodriguez. As to the limitation that the cost allocated by said valuation application is “**a direct function of a user viewing interaction based on a**

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view control input received during a playback of the media content requested,”

Rodriguez, as cited above, teaches that the system includes a pricing system that may “assign a price criteria based on a per/minute (or second) usage fee” when the user engages random-access functionality.

As to claims 2, 22, and 32 Shah teaches the system of claim 1 as well as different prices corresponding to different properties of the video content (e.g., a HD version of a VOD program costs more than the standard-definition version of the same movie, etc) which is cumulative with the recited limitation that **“the content server is further configured to receive the view control input as a first command to select a first property of the media content being rendered and to receive the view control input as a second command to select a second property of the media content being rendered.”** While Shah does not explicitly teach the limitation **“wherein the valuation application is further configured to decrease the cost according to a decrease in distribution cost of the media content having the first property content compared to the media content having the second property,”** the Examiner takes Official Notice that distributing upgraded media content (e.g., the audio or video quality upgrades taught by Fig. 5 of Shah) causes the distributor to incur additional costs, as distributing high-definition video content requires more bandwidth than standard video requires. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the reduced prices of for the lower quality video and/or audio options taught by Fig. 5 of Shah would be the result of reduced distribution costs.

As to claims 18, 25, 34, and 46, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated herein.

The Examiner notes that choosing to cancel a requested set of advertisements is functionally equivalent to the recited **“command to advance past the advertisement such that the advertisement is not rendered for viewing”** as canceling said advertisements would result in the content immediately following said cancelled advertisements to be displayed. As to the recited increasing of the cost in response to said canceling of the advertisements, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the "reaction" to the cancelling taught by Blahut would be to increase the fee for the VOD program since Blahut teaches that the fee charged for the program is directly related to how many advertisements the user receives. By choosing to cancel an advertisement after paying a fee predicated on the viewing of said advertisement, the user is implicitly agreeing to reimburse the VOD provider for the lost revenue of not displaying the selected advertisement. As analyzed above, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that a desired advertising level option could be added to the order form taught by Fig. 5 of Shah to facilitate the initial selection of desired advertising taught by Blahut. This would be beneficial to both the users who are receiving a reduce fee for the VOD program and to the advertisers who are able to reach more potential customers.

As to claim 6, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated herein. The Examiner asserts that the act of ordering a VOD program with a desired level of advertising corresponding to a reduced fee, as taught by Blahut, is cumulative with the recited command **“to render both the advertisement and the media content for viewing”** of

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claim 6. As to the limitation that **"the valuation application is further configured to decrease the cost if the view control input is a command to render the advertisement for viewing,"** Blahut (cited above) teaches that the user receives a reduced fee correlating with the number of advertisements the user agrees to view during the playback of said VOD program.

As to claim 7, Shah teaches the system of claim 1 but does not explicitly teach the recited **"in response to the view control input, distribute the media content as a second media stream to render the media content according to the view control input, and wherein the valuation application is further configured to adjust the cost based on the second media stream."** Rodriguez teaches an analogous system for a Near Video On-Demand (NVOD) system that allows the user to implement various interactive, or "trick play," effects such as rewinding, fast-forwarding, etc. The presence of a plurality of video stream for the same program is inherent in a NVOD system. As to the recited limitation that **"the valuation application is further configured to adjust the cost based on the second media stream,"** Rodriguez teaches:

For example, if the subscriber began viewing a program under the normal play option and later desired to rewind the program, the subscriber may be given the option of utilizing random-access options...This may be accomplished by providing random-access functionality using one or more auxiliary channels...In this option, the pricing system may assign a price criteria based on a per/minute (or second) usage fee, particularly if the on-demand random access is accomplished using a separate random access channel. (col. 27/lines 36-47)

Fig. 5 of Shah teaches that the user may choose to pay for interactive effects, which, in the context of a VOD or NVOD system, would include trick-play functionality such as that described by Rodriguez above. It would have been obvious to one of

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ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the random-access functionality taught by Rodriguez into the system of Shah to enable customers who did not initially order interactive effects to enable such options during playback.

As to claims 9, 11, 27, 39, 40, 48, and 53 the rejection of claim 7 is incorporated herein. The recited **"command to replay a portion of the media content being rendered"** is cumulative with the rewinding taught by Rodriguez, as cited above.

As to claims 10, 12, 28, 37, 38, 49, and 52 the rejection of claim 7 is incorporated herein. As to the recited "command to advance the media content being rendered," Rodriguez teaches that the system can provide users with random-access features including pause, rewind, and fast-forward (col. 24). The fast-forwarding taught by Rodriguez is equivalent to the recited "advance" command.

As to claims 13, 15, and 41, the recited logging is taught by Blahut and Plotnick as analyzed above with respect to claim 1. As to the limitation that the advertisement is rendered for viewing **"based on the view control input,"** Blahut, as cited above, teaches that the system prompts the user before selected ads distributed with the media content are rendered. Electing to proceed with said ads is equivalent to a view control input to render said ads for viewing.

As to claims 19-20, 24, 26, 35, and 47, the rejection of claims 1 and 6 is incorporated herein. As to the limitation recited in claim 24 that **"wherein the cost allocated to the client device is adjusted to zero if the advertisement is rendered for viewing,"** though completely reducing the VOD fee is not explicitly disclosed in Blahut, it would have been obvious that a user could select to view enough

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advertisements that their bill for the show could be completely subsidized (see, e.g., Blahut, col. 2/lines 21-22).

Claims 8 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shah-Nazaroff in view of Plotnick, Blahut, and Rodriguez as applied to claim 1 and 31 above, and further in view of Stuckman et al. (Pub. No.: 2004/0111756).

As to claims 8 and 36, Shah teaches the method of claim 1 but does not explicitly teach the recited, **"wherein the content server is further configured to receive the view control input as a command to end distribution of the media content to the client device, and wherein the valuation application is further configured to decrease the cost in response to a distribution end of the media content."**

Stuckman teaches an analogous system of distributing video to a subscriber wherein the cost charged to the viewer is dependent on the amount of the program watched by the viewer. *"Further, the user may be billed based on how much of the video programs are viewed...The user may be billed for the Discovery Kids' show commensurate with three minutes of viewing time in contrast to viewing the whole show"* [0087]. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the billing method taught by Stuckman into the content distribution system taught by Shah to provide users of Shah's system the benefit of only having to pay for content actually viewed rather than for an entire program.

Claims 14 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shah in view of Blahut and Plotnick as applied to claims 1 and 31 above, and further in view of Eldering et al. (Pub. No.: US 2003/0149975).

As to claims 14 and 42 Plotnick teaches logs/reports about ad play that are stored on the AMS server, but does not explicitly teach that **“the content server is further configured to...log whether the advertisement is rendered for viewing based on a duration that corresponds to rendering both the advertisement and the media content,”** as is recited. In analogous art, Eldering teaches a system for inserting and tracking advertisements in pre-recorded media. Eldering teaches that said tracking includes:

The tracking of ads includes the ads that were received and whether the ads or the alternative ads were viewed. This information is transmitted back to the headend for advertiser billing purposes. The tracking of content tracks the amount of time that the content was viewed and whether the entire program is received...This transmission may include subscriber ID, content ID, viewing duration and reason code if content was not completely viewed. [0111]

Tracking whether the entire program was received and transmitting a viewing duration and reason code if the entire program was not received, as taught by Eldering, is cumulative with the recited **“duration that corresponds to rendering both the advertisement and the media content.”** It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the advertisement logging taught by Eldering with the VOD system taught by Shah in view of Plotnick and Blahut to provide accurate billing information for advertisers. As analyzed w/r/t claim 3, Blahut

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teaches a method for determining the viewing time for a VOD program and selected advertisements distributed with said program.

Claims 16 and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shah-Nazaroff in view of in view of Plotnick, Blahut, and Rodriguez as applied to claim 7 above, and further in view of Yui et al. (US Pat. No.: 6,972,680).

As to claim 16, Rodriguez, as cited above, teaches that the user can activate and pay for trick play functionality; col. 24 of Rodriguez explicitly teaches that the system supports pause functionality. Given that Rodriguez teaches an NVOD system, it is inherent that the user will receive a second stream upon resuming playback after pausing the program; however, the combined teachings of Shah and Rodriguez do not explicitly teach that the playback can be resumed at a second client device, as recited. Fig. 1 of Yui teaches a system in which a user viewing a broadcast television program in one location can move to another location and resume viewing that same program with “time shifted viewing” enabled. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the multi-room viewing capability of Yui with the system of Shah and Rodriguez to allow users to finish watching a program in a different location from where they started. This would have been desirable as users often might wish to be able to start watching a program in one location (e.g., the living room of their house) and resume and/or finish watching that program in another location (e.g., their bedroom).

Contact

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ryan Stronczer whose telephone number is (571) 270-3756. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM (EDT), Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian T. Pendleton can be reached on (571) 272-7527. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ryan Stronczer/
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